Bangladesh. Recently, the prevailing restrictions in providing mobile services within 10 kms of International borders have been relaxed by incorporating the following amendments in the license agreements of mobile service providers.

(i) There shall be a "No Service Zone" of 500 meters width along the International border within Indian Territory for wireless/mobile service, where the Licensee(s) are not permitted to provide wireless/mobile service.

(ii) The Licensee(s) shall create a "Buffer Zone" of 10 kms width along the line of Control (LoC), Line of Actual Control (LAC), Akhnoor and Pathankot areas in J&K, as applicable, wherein they shall not deploy their Cell site(s)/BTS(s) Radio Transmitter(s).

Growth of mobile telephone connections

1829. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the growth of mobile telephone connections has surpassed wireline (fixed) connections by four to one;

(b) whether Government are seized of the extent of Hazards caused by electromagnetic waves emitted from cellular mobile towers and phones;

(c) whether Telecom Engineering Centre has found that radiations continuously emitted from mobile towers and phones can cause fatigue, headache, sleeplessness and loss of memory; and

(d) whether Government would consider evolving guidelines on cell towers and phones in view of the reported hazards?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir. Out of approximately 200 million total telephone connections in the country, the ratio of mobile and fixed phones is about four to one.

(b) to (d) Yes, Sir. A Committee was set up by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, under the Chairmanship of Director General, Indian

Council of Medical Research, including representatives from Telecom Engineering Centre, for preliminary study on health hazards due to mobile phone towers. The Committee had extensive discussions and has opined that, overall, there is not enough evidence to show direct health hazards of RF exposure from mobile base stations.

Plot owned by Department of Posts

1830. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of plots owned by the Department of Posts lying vacant and encroached upon;

(b) the action taken to restore the encroached land to the Department; and

(c) the action taken to put vacant lands to commercial use?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Sir, the information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) Action to put vacant land to commercial use has been initiated. The required steps, e.g. setting up of Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) are under way.

Subletting the space available in post offices

1831. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to sublet space available in post offices for use of ATMs by Banks;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) The Department of Posts is having a Policy for hiring out of vacant built-up